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BLM-AK-GI-91-002-1120-912

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no. 26

blm - alaska

frontiers

managing public lands for multiple use

Issue 26 November 1990



*BLM manages a
hunt— page 6*

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Research: it's easy work in the Public Services Office



Anchorage Public Services Office staffer Thursa Hayward shows a visitor how to find the information he needs on the computers.

Where can I stake a mining claim? What maps do you have? Is this state or federal land? Where can I pan for gold?

These are just some of the questions asked of the BLM's public services staff on a daily basis. This information and more is housed in the public services office (sometimes called the Public Room) where you can come and research land ownership and mineral activities on public lands.

The office has four computer terminals that are easy to operate. You can come in and use any of the terminals yourself. The staff is ready and willing to assist you to retrieve information from these terminals. The data base contains all of the Alaska BLM's official lands and minerals records for the entire state.

The office maintains land status records showing ownership and other information for all of the 18,700 townships in Alaska. A township is a tract of land containing 36 square miles.

Each township can be examined on Master Title Plats on microfiche.

The townships are grouped within Alaska's five principal meridians, dividing the lands into five geographical areas. This method, referred to as the rectangular system of surveys, enables you to locate and identify any tract of land in the state of Alaska.

The public services office began as part of the General Land Office with the intent of making land and mineral records available to the public. It has now evolved into a sophisticated research facility. People using the services are from a broad spectrum: land consultants, attorneys, people interested in recreation, Alaska Native corporations, miners, environmental groups, state offices and other federal offices. All of these people find they are in need of services on a regular basis.

Most of the land status, survey and mineral information is kept on microfiche, microfilm and the computer data base system.

Staff members guide people through a step-by-step process to find the answers to their questions about public lands.

For example, if you wish to find the location of a relative's homestead, a staff member will help you to find the township on a topographic map, then locate it on the Master Title Plat. The homestead will have a serial number, since every land application filed with the BLM is given a serial number for tracking purposes. This serial number will lead you to an official case file containing all the documents pertaining to that homestead.

The microfiche records display survey plats and field notes, patents, easements, townsites, and information on lands status. You can look at the microfiche and microfilm on enlarged screens in the office, or you can obtain paper copies for a small cost. Mining claims can be researched by either the microfiche or the computer data base.

The public services office sells paper copies of all microfiche and microfilm records and computer data on request. In addition, BLM Alaska provides dial-in access to its computer system for a cost-per-minute charge. You may also open a charge account to charge products as you need them.

The public services staff wants to make sure you get the information you need quickly and efficiently. If we don't have what you need, we'll find out where you can get it. Feel free to call the Public Services Section at (907) 271-5960, or write to The Bureau of Land Management Alaska State Office, Public Services Section, 222 W. 7th Avenue, #13, Anchorage, AK 99513.

We'll look forward to hearing from you.

—Lois Simenson
Supervisory Land Law Examiner

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Gravel sale protects Arctic fish stream



BLM natural resource specialist Mary Leykom discusses the mineral sale with Mark Cox, Cominco geologist, at the huge Red Dog mine north of Kotzebue.

A recent BLM gravel sale to the largest zinc mine in North America has taken the pressure off some 50,000 arctic char in the Wulik River. These fish might otherwise have been endangered by zinc-laden overflow from a mine.

The Red Dog zinc and lead mine is located on Red Dog Creek. The creek flows into the Wulik River in remote northwestern Alaska. Cominco Alaska Incorporated operates the mine on land owned by the NANA Corporation, one of the 13 regional Alaska Native corporations established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1970.

The biggest char ever recorded in Alaska—17.5 pounds—came from the Wulik. Besides providing overwintering habitat for a world-class char population, the Wulik also provides drinking water for the village of Kivalina.

Heavy rains and snows in 1989, coupled with a delay in completion of a water treatment plant at the mine, raised the level of the mine's settling pond until it threatened to overflow the dam. The pond contains high levels of zinc and other minerals potentially toxic to fish.

The dam needed another 400,000 cubic yards of gravel and rock to shore it up. The gravel site on NANA land was exhausted. Cominco officials

requested that BLM sell them gravel from a neighboring plot of BLM-managed land to raise the level of the dam. That would allow Cominco to treat the water before it flowed into Red Dog Creek.

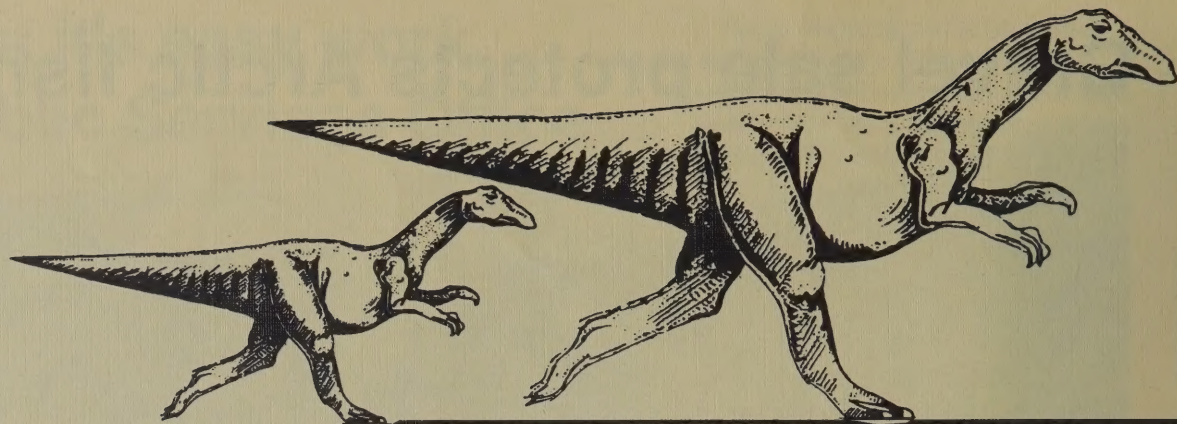
There were a couple of problems to overcome. First, BLM had not programmed a mineral sale in the Kobuk District. Second, a sale of that size required competitive bidding, with no guarantee that Cominco would be the successful bidder.

To accomplish this, a cooperative agreement was entered into by Cominco and BLM. Cominco agreed to pay the expenses for field work and writing the environmental assessment to ensure that BLM could hold a competitive mineral sale at the site.

BLM appraiser Gary McWilliams calculated a fair market value for the material. Then the competitive sale was advertised, and Cominco was the only bidder. The company paid a deposit, a 25 percent bond and one-third of the total price. The total purchase price was \$260,000. The check came to \$173,334. Because the land is selected by the State of Alaska, the money goes into an escrow account to be paid to the state when the land is conveyed.

"It was an emergency situation," said Steve Storo, geologist with the Kobuk District. "I'm glad we were able to help."

—Sue Mitchell



A dig on the Colville River yields a wealth of dinosaur bones, but many questions

On a desolate bend in the Colville River, just a few miles south of the Arctic Ocean, two university graduate students bend over jumbled masses of dinosaur bones in the chill wind. They brush off dirt, pour glue over broken bones to hold the pieces together, form plaster jackets that will protect the bones during shipping, and conjecture about the events responsible for this prehistoric deposit on BLM-administered public lands.

One of the students is Andrea Krumhardt of the University of Alaska Museum. The other is Gayle Nelms from the University of California at Berkeley. Nelms busily scrapes away dirt from a new find—a thigh bone fractured into several pieces. She dabs glue on it before she tries to move it.

A BLM antiquities permit allows the University of California to conduct paleontological field work at this site for two weeks in August each year, a restriction that protects a peregrine falcon nest on the bluff over the site. The parent peregrines fly in and out of their nest on their

daily routine, seemingly undisturbed by the excavation activities below.

At the end of the 2-week dig, the bones will be shipped to Berkeley's paleontology lab for research and preservation. The bones are federal property, but will be permanently housed with the University of Alaska Museum collection.

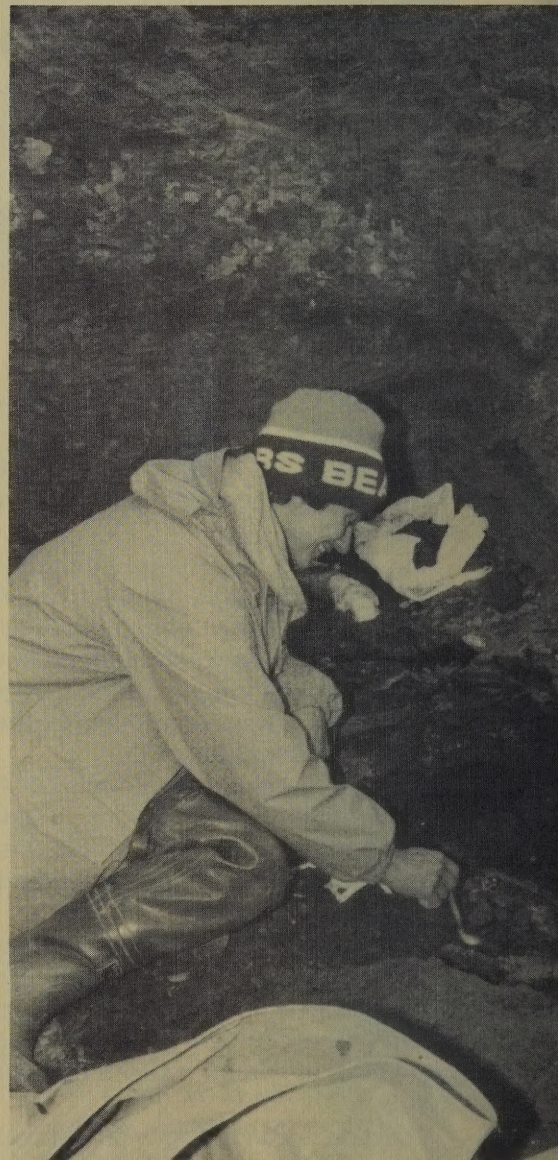
This site at Ocean Point on the Colville River was discovered in 1961 by an oil company geologist, but the bones were not accurately identified until years later.

Serious excavation, which provided the first systematic collection and study of dinosaur remains in Alaska, started in 1985.

The discovery of such a prolific dinosaur bone deposit on BLM-managed land in Arctic Alaska has created a stir in the scientific community worldwide, and puts a new slant on many of the existing theories about this prehistoric creature.

Why were so many bones deposited at this one site, and why are they in such a jumble? Dr. Roland Gangloff, curator of Earth Science Collections and associate professor geology at the University of Alaska Museum, speculates that a herd of dinosaurs was crossing the Colville river after a storm, was hit by a flash flood, carried downstream and drowned. As

***Hadrosaurus*, a duck-billed dinosaur, stood upright, was 10 feet or more high, 10-40 feet long, and weighed up to three tons.**



Andrea Krumhardt from the University of Alaska Museum works on a dinosaur bone, under the watchful eye of Dr. John Cook,

ARCTIC DINOSAURS

*er in northern Alaska
r remains—and just as*



*anks brushes dirt from the shoulder blade of a
1 archaeologist.*

bodies piled up, a length of river bank gave way. Water then rushed through the gap, pulling many of the bodies along as it formed a large, shallow lake. The bodies, along with plant debris, began to decay, and the dismembered carcasses were eventually buried by suspended sediment as the water current slowed and stilled.

The dinosaur bones at Ocean Point date from the late Cretaceous period, just at the end of the age of dinosaurs, about 65 to 75 million years ago. The majority of the species identified are plant-eating, duck-billed dinosaurs called hadrosaurs.

"We've recovered enough bones to create about 40 percent of a skeleton, including part of a skull," Krumhardt said. The general rule of thumb is that if you get 50 percent, you can cast a mirror-image skeleton to create the other side, ending up with a complete skeleton."

Graduate student Nelms hopes her research will help answer some of the questions that surround the existence and demise of the dinosaurs on Alaska's North Slope. Did an asteroid impact trigger a mass extinction 65 million years ago? Dr. William Clemens, head of paleontology at the Museum of Paleontology at the University of California at Berkeley, speculates that the North Slope fossils show

that hundreds of dinosaurs might have survived an asteroid crash. Dr. Gangloff agrees, adding that while the short-term cold and darkness caused by collision with an asteroid would, under most circumstances, have affected dinosaurs living year-round at lower latitudes, the North Slope dinosaurs were already adapted to those conditions.

We may never know all the answers to the questions surrounding the dinosaurs, but through the cooperative research efforts of students and scientists from the universities of Alaska and California, and logistical support from BLM Alaska and its Arctic District and the U.S. Geological Survey, new and exciting facts continue to emerge to unveil the mystery of these prehistoric creatures.

—Sharon Durgan Wilson

WHYY-TV of Philadelphia went to the Colville River area in August to videotape this unique excavation. The program will appear on the Public Broadcasting System in 1992, and will also show plant and seashell fossils along the Colville River.

BLM and subsistence

—or how federal agencies came to manage a hunt



Top: BLM Special Agent Dean Crabbs briefs hunters passing through the Tangle Lakes checkpoint near Paxson. Bottom: These two caribou were taken during the first day of the federal subsistence hunt along the Denali Highway.

BLM's role as habitat manager for wildlife and fisheries is well known in the western U.S. But in Alaska, the summer and fall of 1990 found BLM land managers suddenly responsible for also managing the animals, a function normally done by the state fish and game managers.

How did BLM and other federal land managers get into this position? The answer lies in a law that is unique to Alaska.

Congress labored over and debated for years the hard-fought legislation called the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, or ANILCA. This law, finally passed in 1980, left BLM in charge of long-term management of 70+ million acres, and also put about one-third of Alaska into parks and wildlife refuges managed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

A key part of the law guarantees rural Alaskans the opportunity to pursue traditional subsistence activities, such as hunting, fishing, trapping, berry gathering and other resource utilization.

The law also requires federal land managers (BLM, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Park Service) to take over management of the fish and game if the state fails to provide a rural preference system for subsistence on federal lands.

During the first ten years after ANILCA became law, the state of Alaska was able to juggle the difficulties of administering both a "subsistence" and a "sport" hunting and fishing system. But in 1990 the Alaska Supreme Court ruled the state's subsistence laws were unconstitutional. The state legislature was unable to fashion a solution to the dilemma. As a result, federal agencies, as mandated by

ANILCA, are now managing the harvest of fish and game for subsistence uses on federal lands in Alaska.

An inter-agency working group of professionals from the various federal land managing agencies was assembled last spring to develop an interim subsistence management program for all federal lands in Alaska. These lands include more than 200 million acres of parks, wildlife refuges, forests, BLM lands, and military reservations.

The inter-agency group researched a variety of legal and technical issues, reviewed existing state regulations, and wrote emergency regulations to develop the program. BLM was represented in this effort by Bob King and Tom Boyd of the Alaska State Office. "Everyone worked in high gear and the level of cooperation between agencies was exceptional," said Boyd.

The first on-the-ground test of BLM as a manager of wildlife populations occurred at BLM's Glennallen District, which manages a large chunk of the habitat used by the Nelchina caribou herd. This is the herd that is most accessible to hunters from Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Within a two-week period, the BLM's Glennallen District issued more than 650 subsistence permits for this hunt. After the subsistence hunt opened, the state opened the area to sport hunting. Alaskan hunters responded well to this confusing situation, and no major problems were encountered.

A number of lawsuits have been filed by various interest groups contesting many aspects (some federal and some state) of the current situation. These lawsuits, by all accounts, will take years to work their way through the legal process. In the meantime, BLM and other federal land managers are planning to have permanent regulations in place by December 31, 1991. They will be written after widespread public meetings are held around the state.

—Rob McWhorter

Glennallen District closes illegal dumps

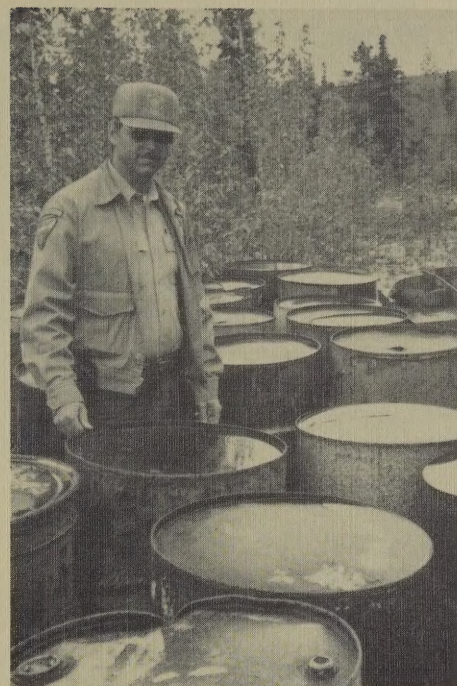
"A bad habit is harder to break than a rubber ball," says BLM Glennallen District Manager Gene Keith, talking about district efforts to shut down unauthorized dump sites on public land. For years, many bush residents were in the habit of just dumping garbage at the local trash heap.

"However, most people have been very cooperative and do understand the need to use proper dump facilities," Keith added.

The job is hard but the Glennallen District, working with the state, has made some good progress in the last several years in getting eight old unpermitted landfills shut down. Within the last year, unauthorized dumps at both Slana and Paxson have been closed.

Why close down these dumps, since the areas are so remote and people need a place to dump? According to Mark Phillips, wildlife biologist at Glennallen, "The dumps may well contain hazardous materials which can linger in the ecosystem for many decades. Three of the dumps were CERCLA sites, meaning they had been placed on Environmental Protection Agency's list of sites needing to be checked for the presence of hazardous materials. They have since been checked and fortunately were found to be free of hazardous substances. At this time, they do not appear to pose a health threat to humans, but may well be harmful to certain species of wildlife."

Alternative trash disposal is



Despite the large number of drums, this dump site at Paxson was found to be a non-hazardous substance site. BLM Ranger Bob Posey patrols this area regularly to prevent further dumping.



This junk accumulated in the now-closed Paxson dump.

offered to the 3,400 residents of the Copper River basin by a fully licensed and permitted company. Two legal dumps exist in the basin, one at Nelchina and one north of Glennallen at mile 125 on the Richardson Highway. In addition, BLM has an open offer to provide lands for this purpose to qualifying parties obtaining the necessary permits.

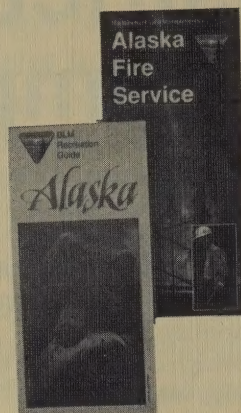
Glennallen Ranger Bob Posey keeps an alert watch for new dump sites or new dumping at old spots. "After this summer we should have a real good handle on the landfill problem," says Posey. "We've been working closely with folks, helping to educate them on the dangers of hazardous materials, and how they stay with us once released."

—Rob McWhorter

frontier flashes

BLM's Alaska Resources Library recently acquired more than 150 titles from the Alaska State Library in Juneau. When it closed its circulating collection, the state library distributed the books to other libraries around the state. Because the BLM library is considered the primary collector of natural resource materials in the state, it received many valuable books in this field.

The resource library, located in the Anchorage Federal Building, is open to the public. For more information call (907) 271-5025.



Among several new publications BLM recently produced are two full-color folders. One is BLM Recreation Guide: Alaska. This popular publication, now revamped to fit into a new national series, contains a map of southcentral Alaska; a description of all BLM campgrounds; discussions of scenic highways, conservation areas and hiking trails; and a general description of the cabin program and Wild and Scenic Rivers program.

The other full-color folder, *The Bureau of Land Management's Alaska Fire Service*, tells the story of the people who put their lives on the line each summer protecting Alaska's resources.

In September BLM's Anchorage District completed a reciprocal right-of-way agreement with the Gateway subdivision in Eagle River. First of its kind in Alaska, the agreement gives private landowners in the subdivision legal access across BLM land and gives BLM an administrative non-exclusive right-of-way across their land.

BLM Equal Employment Office staffer Cliff Ligon was Alaska delegate to the National Conference of Blacks in Government. Ligon represented FAA, the Post Office, Customs Office, HUD, and the Municipality of Anchorage. The conference dealt with current issues facing federal employees including attitudes and feelings when you're the only black person in the workplace; problems of blacks with disabilities; and lupus, a disease that primarily affects black s.



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Chief, Public Affairs: David Vickery
Editor/writer/design: Jane G. Mangus
Illustration/computer graphics: Jim Mroczek

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Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
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